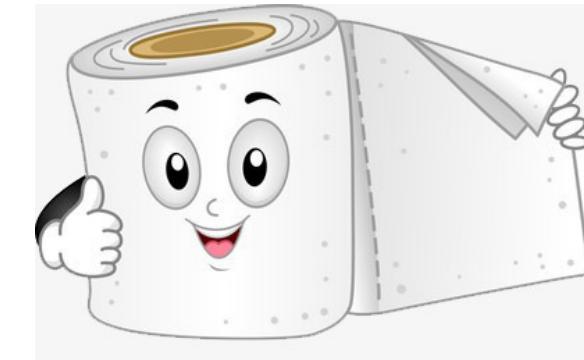


*Check out our new art gallery  
on the web!  
<https://www.thepublication.github.io/toilette> :)*

*Thoughts on jokes involving pee pee and poo poo?  
Let us hear them! The apologetics of peee pee poo poo are  
the apologetics for the people. Essay to come.*

# A Toilet Ross Travelsogue



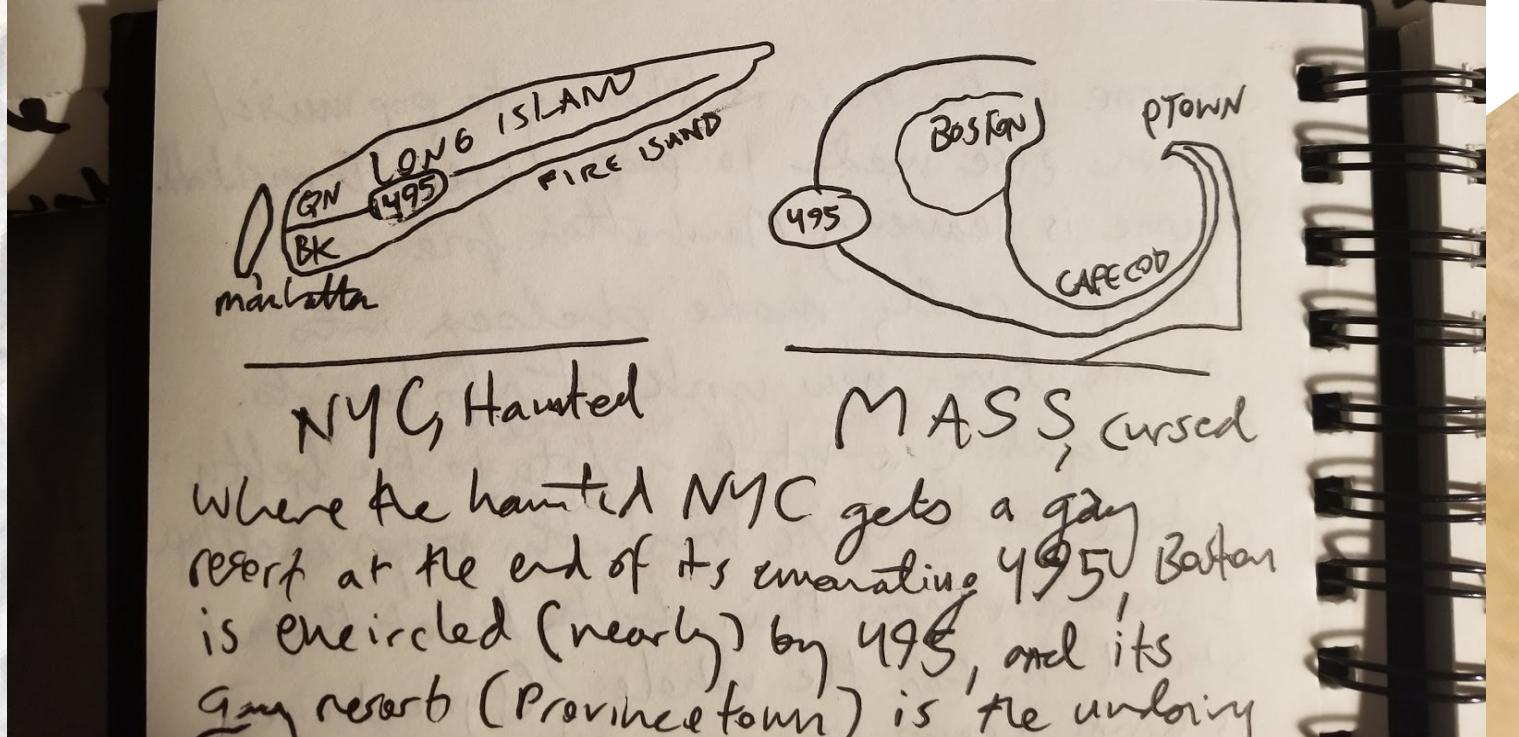
## Foreword

*Someone on the train is listening to pop music  
& someone else needs to poop - badly, I might add  
Someone is leaving Manhattan forever.*

They've really made Chelsea into a miniature version of New York City for tourists. The rambling (perhaps mumbling) Highline, partially designed by wunderkinds Diller + Scodifio, operates as a trendy, experiential-scale-model of Olmstead's Central Park. This spinal replacement attempt for Manhattan still effectively does the job of throwing spatial disdain against the street; from the Highline's causeway, however, one is placed on the uppermost deck of a tourist bus and told, with no nostalgia, "there is no place that isn't here." I imagine how this willingness to let the part stand in for the whole (synecdoche) is what keeps NYC from being cursed.

Curses befall individuals (and cities) with a greater and sometimes misguided sense of true being. With urban jungle as haunted woods, each thing in NYC is as New York as the next until, before you know it, you've stranded yourself on Fire Island. Out here, many cursed (read: queer) folks emerge from the haunting presence of the city, put their best side toward the unobscured sun, and pretend the gravitational pull of Long Island won't inevitably tug them back in. The ride back doesn't reveal at what point one officially crosses back over into haunted space.

BOSTON, can'ton wanted to be haunted

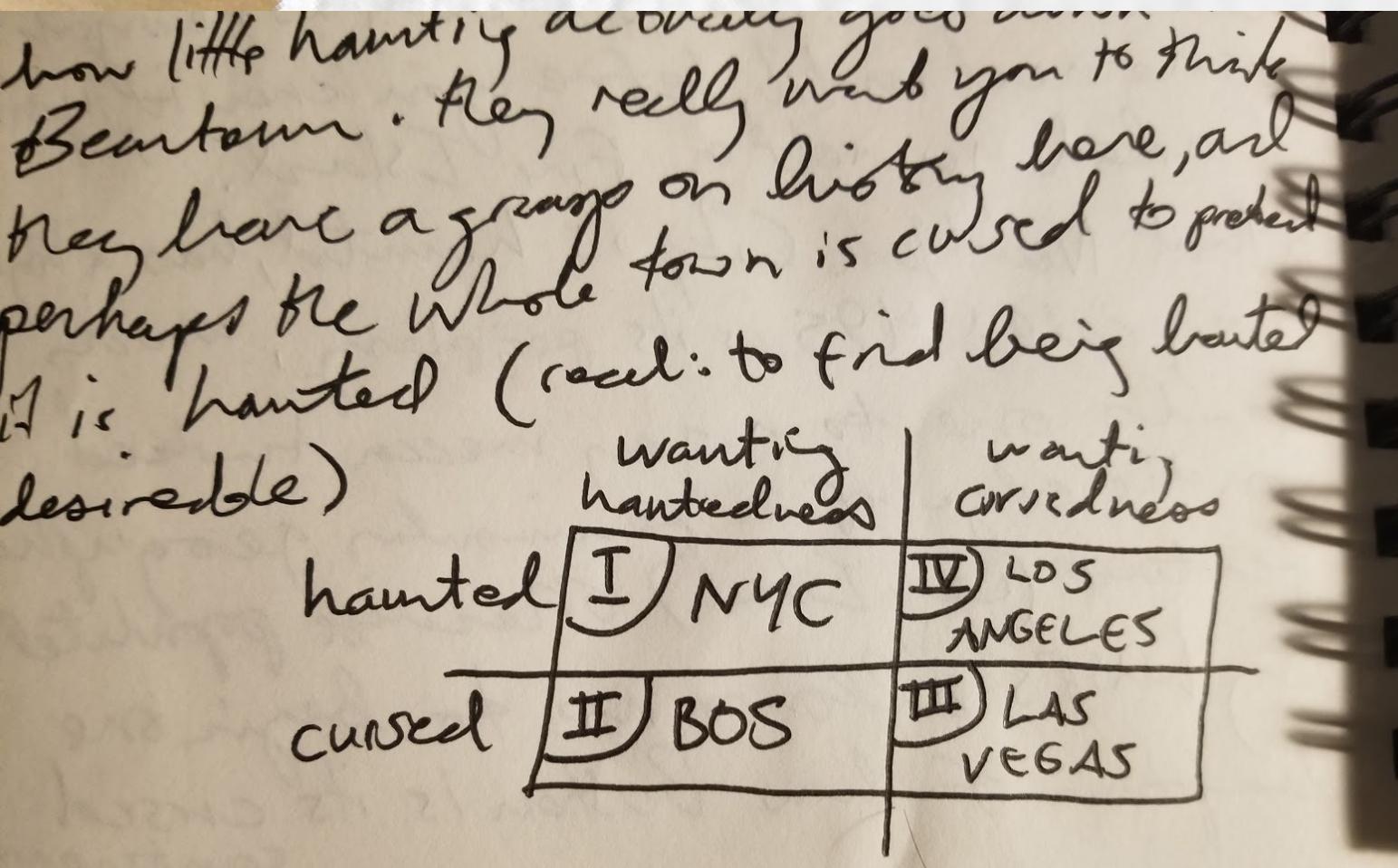


Where the haunted NYC gets a gay resort at the end of its emanating 495, Boston is encircled (nearly) by 495, and its gay resort (Provincetown) is the undying

One diagram of such haunting finds a cursed counterpart in Boston. Both metro areas have peripheral I-495 highways (which do not connect, mind you) that lead to gay meccas at the tip of a peninsular geographic feature otherwise frequented by WASPS. Where NYC's 495 emanates from its core, Boston's 495 nearly circles it and, halted by ocean, terminates at gay Provincetown on the hook of Cape Cod. A cursed area is thus clearly marked as opposed to the gradient of haunting intensity.

In the same way it is miraculous that NYC is not cursed, given the number of cursed people who reside there, it is also hard to believe how little haunting actually goes down in historically conscious Beantown. Their ardent passion for concepts like the freedom trail, elitist academia, and generational racism suggest the whole town is cursed to pretend it is haunted (or perhaps to at least find hauntness desirable).

Hauntedness & cursedness emanate from one another particularly through metrics of desire. It is here that I propose that the fluctuations in these qualities result from the confusing production of social identity in established systems like cities. To take NYC and Boston as a relatively self-equalizing node of haunting/cursed energy acknowledges that Boston has a desire to be like NYC while NYC has a confidence that it is indeed better (whatever that may mean). The cursed city shrinks from its edges and compares itself to others; the haunted city does not know its edge and brings all elements to be somewhere within its influence.



Time and space play important roles here, as suggested by proposing the existence of regional nodes. On the level of the individual, experiences in transitory spaces such as the street, the park, or the bathroom, reveal much more nuance than provided by the dichotomous tools we will use as shorthand in the following survey. We include brief descriptions of such spaces toward understanding the fluctuating systemic distribution of hauntings and curses in the United States between two of the extreme nodes: the NYC-BOS node from which we traveled westward to the Los Angeles-Las Vegas node.

So without further ado, a Travelogue of one American constellation as told by a Gemini, a Scorpio, and a cat named Dende (with annotation on the cursed or haunted nature of each city passed thru, including footnotes on the memorable bathrooms visited.) BONE APITEET.

**Haunted  
Cursed**

## **Wanting Hauntedness**

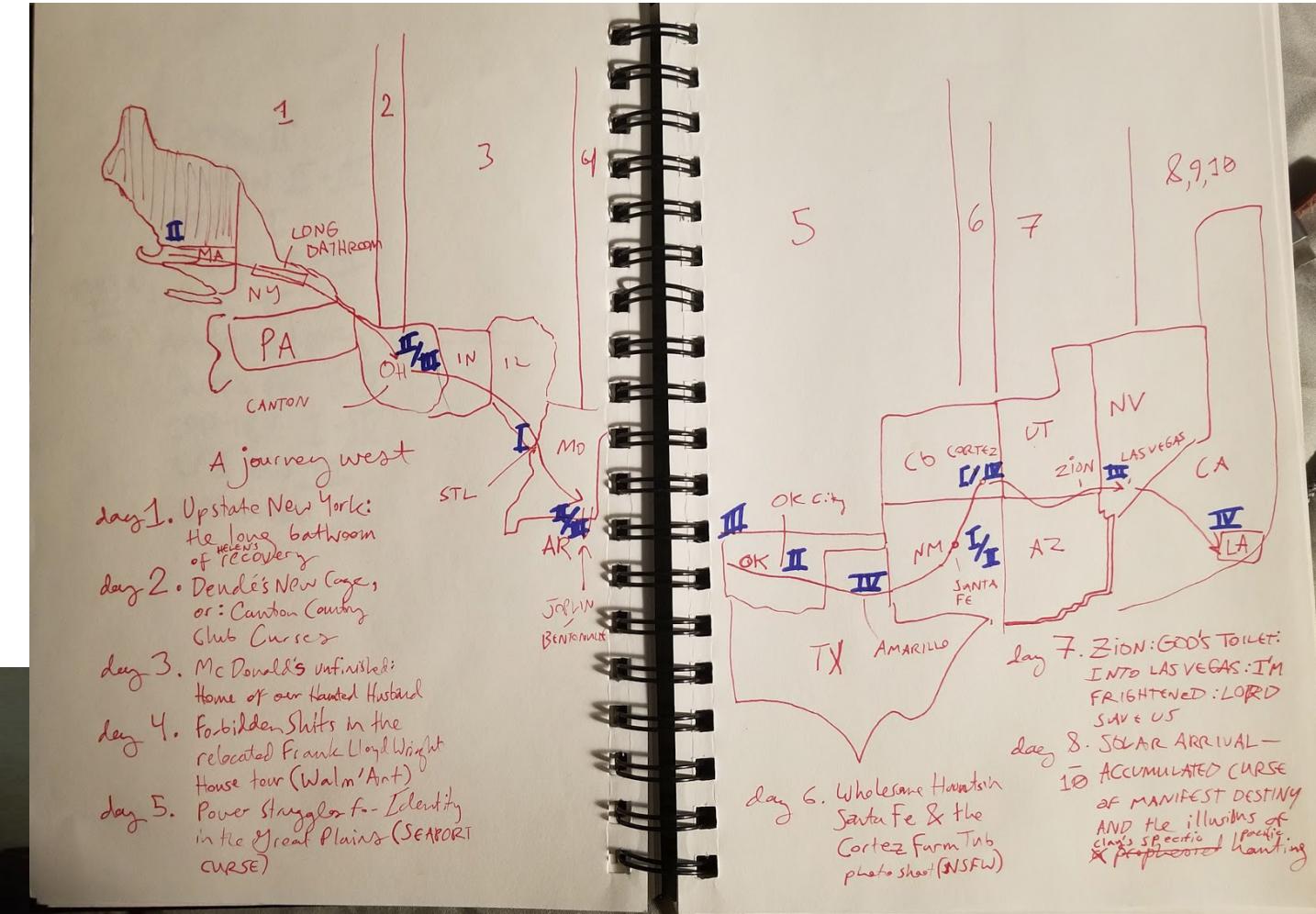
**I: NYC**

**III: Boston**

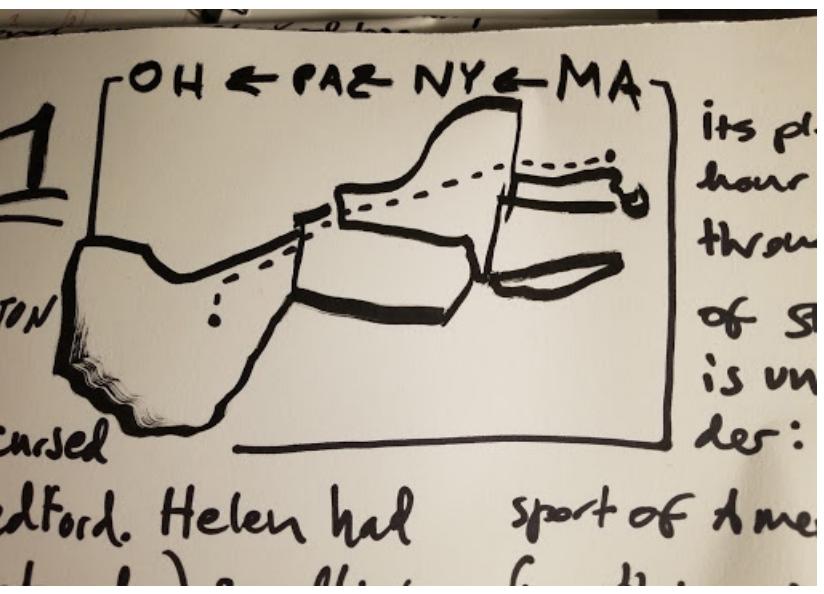
## **Wanting Cursedness**

**II: Los Angeles**

**IV: Las Vegas**



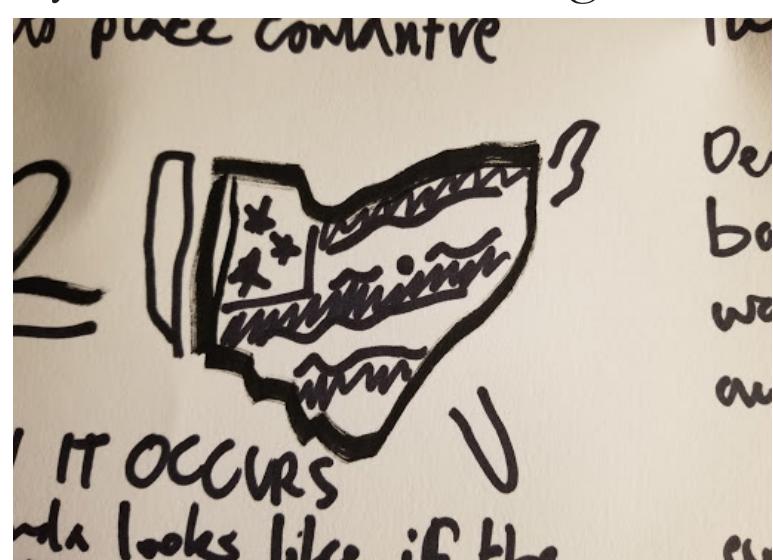
## Day 1. Upstate New York: The Long Bathroom of Helen's Recovery



We left cursed Boston and, in turn, the Cloud Cellar in the more subtly cursed south-reaches of Medford. Helen had only liquid (blue Gatorade) and saltines in her system. I was going to get her to the west coast “cum hel or high water.” The bowel-turning fever of 103 F implored us to make up lost time and ignore all chances to piss until we reached NY state. The bathrooms on the NY Thruway exist as variations on a theme and the 3 we frequented nearly approximated a sonata, with the first as an expository fugue (one we’ve all heard before). It is remarkable to travel 400+ miles in one state and only encounter massive gas-food-w.c. format rest stops, elongated to exit ramps at either end.

Night fell and the stretch of road felt neither haunted or cursed (as mostly rural areas often don’t) washed in billboards which promised an approach to Niagara. As with all mentions of waterfalls, the piss flowed, only this time it was all over our clothes and Helen’s belongings shoved in the backseat. Dende, our own personal curse, chewed her way out of the cloth carrier Casseb passed down to us and made a bathroom of the car. Fitting, though the kitty Xanax awaiting us at Helen’s parent’s place couldn’t’ve come sooner.

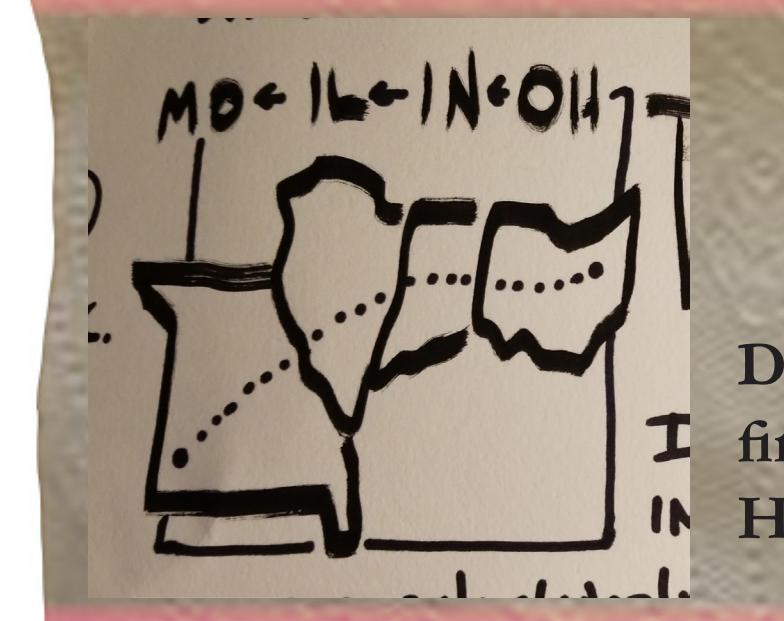
## Day 2. Dende’s New Cage, or: Canton Country Club Curses



At rest in Canton it occurs to us that Ohio kinda looks like if the US had its extremities cut off. Like Boston, Canton wanted to be haunted (but by football?) yet its plethora of restaurants and 24-hour gaming centers scattered throughout its equally formidable number of strip malls brought about an all too familiar, low-grade curse that is little to no collective imagination. Someone who is unwilling to research (me) is left to wonder: why did the gruff sport of American Football emerge from this, its primordial slop of sorts.

All the bathrooms in Helen’s place had something for me to laugh about: the weird face-sculpture in the basement, the poster of some “escorts club” Helen insisted was a legitimate and not gay political party, and, upstairs, brick floors if I recall?\* (I may have made that up, just like Canton made up football).

From this vantage point, the remaining road upon which we would travel felt full of mystery. The wide blue sky above the swimming pool, where we retired to get harassed by golf men after successfully acquiring a Dende-proof carrier, was marked with this sense of the unknown. Although I sensed, much in the way I assume Helen knew folks that had peed in this very pool, I would soon come to pass through the land of known stretches of road. Ohio did feel like a different Midwest than mine, and indeed the conflicting notions of Midwestern experience play out on the geography. Thankfully, neither of us was confined to the most narrow reading: the Midwest as only states touching the Great Lakes. Truth be told, Helen may consider herself an Appalachian Gal.



## Day 3. McDonald's Unfinished: Home of Our Haunted Husband

I tried to smoke weed in the Port-a-potty near a shockingly corporate Starbucks in Columbus but the blue tube reaked of awful bad shit. Another tube nearby was alluringly hard to enter due to its being made of ornate cinder blocks. The theme of this day was tubes. In line with this theme, we put Dende in her new, more tube-like carrier and barreled across Left Ohio.

The conservatism was pungent in Indianapolis, denying any hint of its being cursed by Pence Stench.

I told Hel about the sadness that is Southern Illinois as I entered Tour Guide Mode (and Helen officially exited Sicko Mode) before the distant St. Louis Arch triggered what I believe is the true beginning of our road hysteria. This was just in time to get out and travel on foot to see the least haunted part of St. Louis with the nicest haunted person we know—our husband Isaac.

\*Editor's note: It's not doubtful that it was a gay club, it's just doubtful that my ancestor men were cool enough to be in a queer political party

One of us had kombucha on tap at dinner. The situation had called for us to move fast, the playlists of the road still vibrating as we contended with the remaining drive to Joplin. Isaac had grown up here, and, in classic Missouri fashion, loved company unironically. We rejected the prospect of grabbing drinks in favor of returning to our carbound kitten. Walking back I misidentified the cicadas as tree frogs; Isaac didn't believe my assertion that there were tree frogs in Joplin. For a moment, I wondered if my parents had just been misidentifying cicadas every summer of my childhood. Only time would tell.

## Day 4. Forbidden Shits on the Relocated Frank Lloyd Wright House Tour (Walm'art)

Joplin, MO.

Crystal Bridges,  
Arkansas

## A reimagining of the Bachman-Wilson House



Presumably, this version would have more than two toilets

Following my parents' ritualistic arrival procedure (which begins with leaving the porch light on the night prior) we decided to bring Helen to the anomalous Crystal Bridges museum—an inversion of what one might expect from a day trip into Arkansas.

The Moshe Safdie-designed complex straddles a valley stream on a large tract of forested land just north of Downtown Bentonville, AR. smooth concrete, steam-bowed wooden rafters, and glass walkways which turn to look upon themselves should indicate that the bathrooms were exquisite here. Just one detail tarnished the free and impressively curated museum: its being bankrolled by a Walmart heiress.

How can art craft and, for that matter, artfully crafted space contend with the cursed nature of its provenance? Or, for that matter once over, can a home haunted by its overbearing architect escape his fussy dominion simply by being relocated? I speak, of course, of a Frank Lloyd Wright home on the grounds of Crystal Bridges, once a New Jersey example of Wright's Usonian period of homemaking.

A term he coined, Usonian homes were effectively compact structures made from simple materials that were meant to let affluent suburban ninnies believe they were participating in a more democratic and socialist mode of living. By restraining ones' family to a home with the actual smallest windowless bathrooms imaginable and only having room for Wright's stiff, uncomfortable looking furniture (one could not sit on either the toilet or the chairs) it became clear through the audio tour that the answer to my previous questions was: it simply isn't possible. Haunting and Curses don't go away, particularly in the realm of preservationists systems like american art museums and cities.

There was so little room for a reinvention of the place where I grew up, where I retrench myself with every visit for the sake of comfort and relatability with my family. The activities and places we return to are simply memes performing their memetic duties, which are to become the sculptures and Wal(l/m)Art in the palace of my mind. At least we would soon pass beneath the second arch of an actual McDonald's on our way to Tulsa tomorrow, escaping the brackets of a past I would have to make progress unpacking at a later date



## Day 5. Power Struggles for Identity in the Great Plains

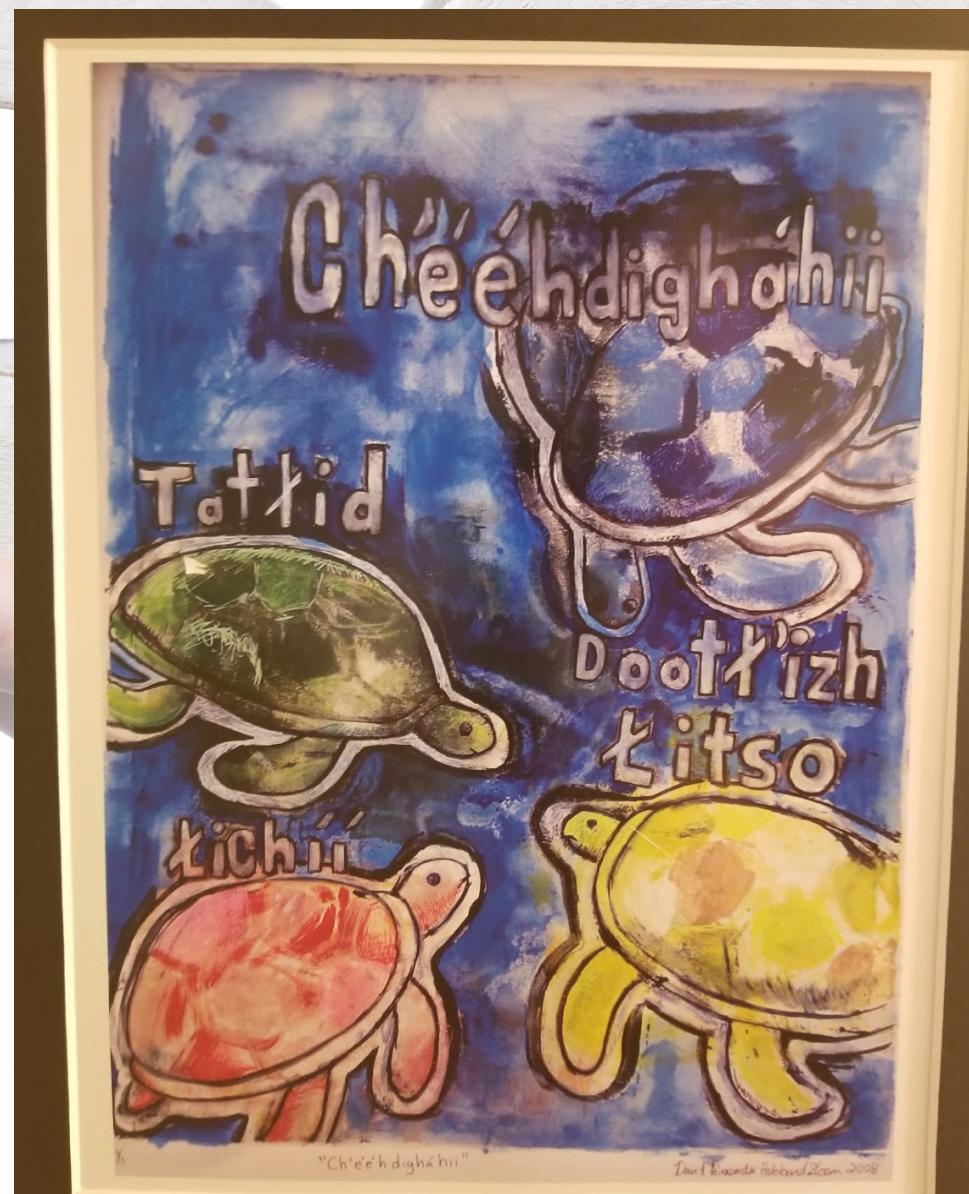
This is where things really started to get funky. Driving through Oklahoma brought out a particularly bold energy between us. Suddenly we were undercover. We were straight, and this was my wife. At a Wendy's, after Hel slept thru all of ceaselessly cursed OK City, her choice to wear a Be the Cowboy shirt was remarkably powerful for its misinterpretativity. Families in the fast food joint wore extremely blue jeans and actual cowboy hats while a travelling volleyball team waited nervously with their receipts. I wish I could remember what the cashier said my name was, but it wasn't my name. She laughed so much. I think she said Lance

The land became impactfully open. Sight was limited more by the car's structure than by the surrounding trees. Amarillo tried really hard to congeal around us. In the dry heat, Texas lasted several albums and transformed like a gradient into New Mexico. And just like that, we were queer once more!

While I generally don't support the concept of geopolitical boundaries, the Cartesian distinction between Texas and New Mexico which we crossed carried particular significance (beyond our social performativity). This is because Miss Dende was borne of this desert territory, and she quickly emerged from a three-lidded slumber without the expected plaintive meows. I can only assume her camouflage went beyond the sandy color of her fur here. Her suffering, including the two weeks she spent on the streets of Medford weeks prior, was soon to come to an end. Though not quite yet, I'm afraid.

In making good time we visited few bathrooms on this stretch, and even briefly worried we would run out of gas in the middle of the desert. The pump we stopped at was literally ancient and, as a train slowly crawled past, a barefoot man in harem pants emerged from the single house next to the station to ask where we were headed. It occurred to me that people were unreasonably nice in New Mexico, despite being rotted hippies.

Upon our dinner celebration in Santa Fe, which Helen heralds as an Amulet City (unable to be haunted or cursed), we learned that yuppies still existed here. We were enraged to overhear a group of business types discuss the best sushi places in LA and, more hauntingly, proclaim their love of Boston's cyborg Seaport District. Shrinking into the corner, we took solace in knowing, as one does on such a road trip, that a person and the place they occupy are often wildly different, both conceptually and in terms of their haunted or cursed status. And although that energy can be transferred, no eavesdropped dinner conversations fashioned against us shall prosper.



We headed into the mountains to Hispaniola where our first Airbnb awaited us. A guest house at a weaver's studio, the magical space started with a 5ft ceiling that slowly tapered upward to allow human standing. It was a magical place that offered endless intrigue. In the bathroom, peculiar prints reimagined Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles as 4 primary (plus green rather than purple) color-coded turtles labeled "Ch'eehdigháhii," "Tatłid," Dootłizh Litso," and "Lichíi." Needless to say, all three of us felt deeply at home. Somewhere, a turtle has its own room in one side of a duplex; as for myself, I felt like that turtle here, and could have spent much more slow time in that space.

## Day 6. Wholesome Haunts in Santa Fe & the Cortez Farm Tub Photoshoot (NSFW)

Before diving back in to Santa Fe, we first visited a gulch that sometimes was a river "when it was turned on" as the resident weaver informed Helen on a morning walk. The red squishy clay here made for a great salve in light of the extremely aggressive dog that did not appreciate us going there. I spent a long time trying to park and only briefly went around historic Santa Fe, as we were concerned Dende would be fried under her native sun. Nonetheless, the time was bright and auspicious. We were both pretty stoked to head into the mountains for our next exciting leg of travel.

Along the way we reached "Aztec Ruins" that were not actually Aztec but nonetheless remarkably well maintained for being 9,000 years old.\* It was unclear which spaces were intended to be bathrooms in the ruins, but the urinals in the visitors center had lil' cartoon bees that indicated where one was meant to aim their piss. Before the park ranger kicked us out, we were able to bask in the splendor of a civilization that was probably a lot more interesting than the one that led to its downfall. There were live bees surrounding the Subaru when we left.

Where time was long the day before, the overwhelming nature of the beauty (and vice versa) outside seemed to sap the time and, before long, sun was nearly set. I realize now that the Rocky Mountains probably also blocked some of the daylight from reaching us. We reached a plateau of sorts just north of Mesa Verde (a place we had originally planned to visit) as we zeroed in on our farmhouse outside of Cortez, CO. The color of twilight here had us standing in silence in the driveway for about 20 minutes. We were greeted by a very jovial (and clearly less intelligent) cat that immediately knew Dende was important to meet. We kept them apart and marvelled in the glorious tub that was clearly made for Helen to take a royal bath. We first set off into town for a bite at a brewery on Cortez' very plain-spoken main street, and then returned for the momentous bath occasion. I'm honored to have been able to document the experience.



## Day 7. Zion, God's Toilet: Into Las Vegas, I'm Frightened, Lord Save Us

Needless to say we woke up feeling fairly refreshed and in great shape considering that we'd been on the road for a week at this point. My outfit was bonkers for this longer road day, with a pleather vest and green basketball shorts to really confuse the shit out of any people we might encounter. That said, we really didn't have many interactions with humans on this leg of travel. This day's route wound between Utah and Arizona, through countless types of desert. Examples include: desert with large rock, desert with cracks in it, desert with strange small tree things, desert with strange mirage-like giant body of water, and desert with a rest stop shaped like a parallelogram.

That there was no direct route to Las Vegas allowed for us to make a last minute decision to drive through Zion National Park. We embarked from this fork in the road only to discover at the Park's gate that crossing would cost \$35. I can say this is the best \$35 I have ever spent. We literally were slowly taken through the pipes of God's enormous Toilet. The whole of creation slid into the fabric of our surroundings where mountain goats chilled with us and we traipsed across unbelievable rock formations. Its the sort of place Funky Kong would send you in his cannon after a long ASMR pep talk.

That is until we entered a long tunnel. Have you ever wondered where God's shits go once flushed? WELL, they are released into a Jurassic Park canyon that has ancient waterfall stains all over it. The canyon was the biggest enclosure of air I've ever been inside. I go there still in dreams, switching back a thousand times until I am released in the tourist town at its mouth. I myself am one of God's shits and I now know what Faith feels like.

After that extremely spiritual experience it was only fitting that we descend into what actually felt like Hell on Earth. That's right, we approached Las Vegas with headaches from altitude shifts that only were made more acute by the constant honking of horns and actual screaming that surrounded us once on street level in Las Vegas.

Our apartment, which an Uber driver informed us was on the side of town “where the bad drugs were,” had no furniture and instead had two large inflatable roosters and french fries (also inflated). And indeed, we started walking toward the strip, extremely hungry, and saw people who actually looked dead but were driving cars or using their

cell phones while sitting on the rubble next to empty lots surrounded by barbed wire.

Las Vegas, at its heart, is terrifying, inhospitable, and not very fun as a pit stop. We wandered around aimlessly, stopping here and there for overpriced cocktails and imagining what it would take for us to be interested in doing any of the gambling that surrounded us. We dared not approach the long line that snaked out of Señor Frog’s, though if we had skipped Zion earlier perhaps we would have paid its \$30 cover. Honestly we both went home with significant migraines and would probably do it all over again. Thus is the feedback loop of a Haunted City that wants to be Cursed. Like New York, it had no limits despite trying its best to corral us on the strip.

## Days 8-10. Solar Arrival: Accumulated Curse of Manifest Destiny & Clay’s Delusional Pacific

I left Las Vegas wanting to be cursed when I was, in truth, only haunted. This is because, until we arrived in Los Angeles, I believed my wallet had been left at one of the side bars in Caesar’s Palace. Returning there in the daytime before we inevitably left Sin City, the scorching heat made the metal handles on the doors difficult to open.

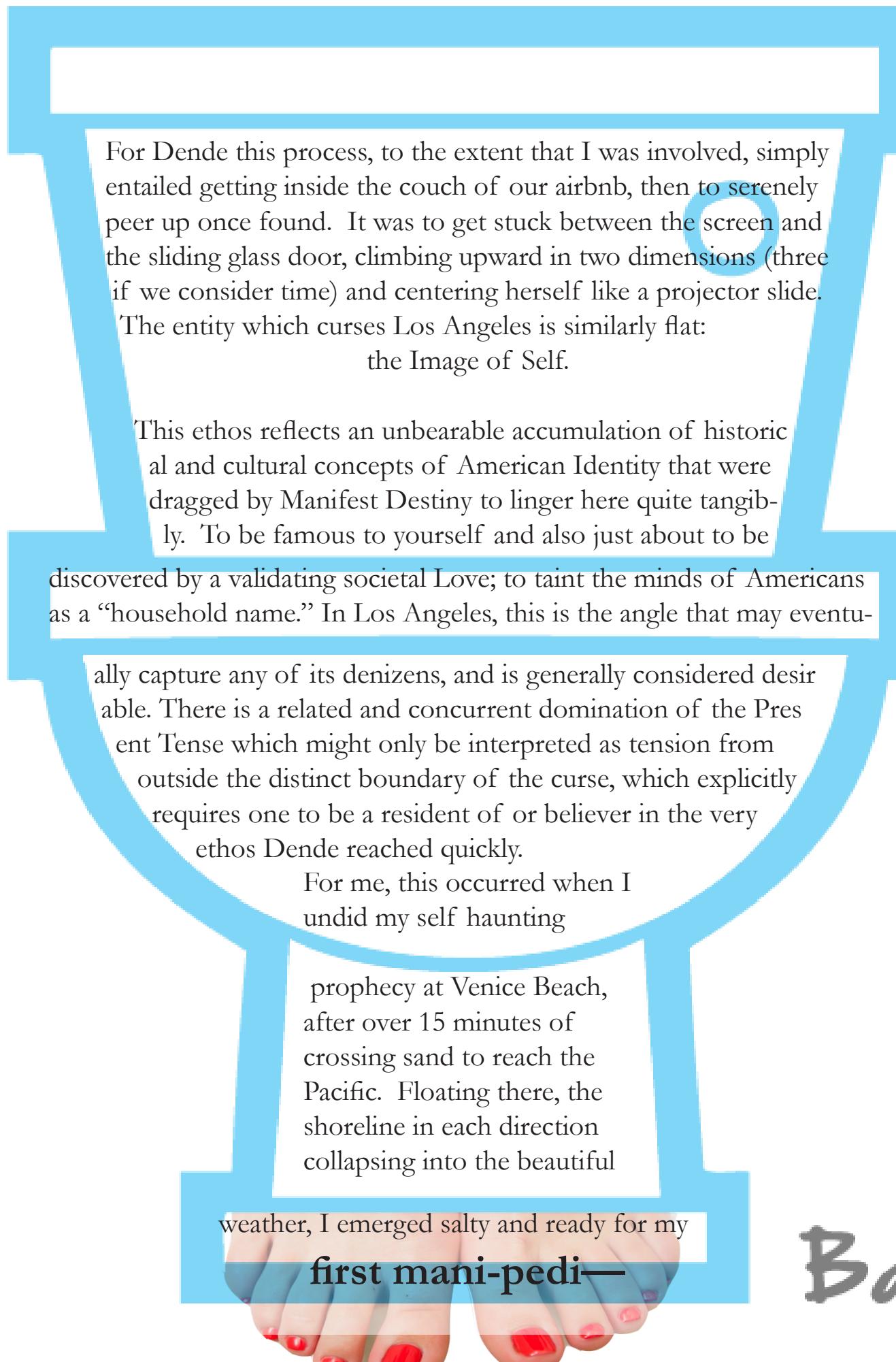
I had  
Mauri ship  
me my  
passport.

It also made my impression of Las Vegas more grim than if I had more time there and less dread from losing important travel documents.

In Death Valley, believing myself unable to drive, I watched Helen become more and more ready to be a Californian. Her driving etiquette, from the way she called the road the freeway to her use of article adjectives and a glow-in-the-dark rosary on her rear view mirror, became a conduit for a new mode of being, one I saw myself ready to face despite my own mythology.

It is here I must admit that ever since I read Grapes of Wrath in middle school, realized Little Miss

Sunshine was a modern retelling (think about it), and left the Methodist church after reading the entire Bible in a year with the help of an app, I was convinced I would die as soon as I saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time, kinda like Moses. As we crossed the last spate of mountains and looked out upon the hazy expanse of Los Angelesian sprawl, I knew these oceans of both water and people were to baptize the three of us.



For Dende this process, to the extent that I was involved, simply entailed getting inside the couch of our airbnb, then to serenely peer up once found. It was to get stuck between the screen and the sliding glass door, climbing upward in two dimensions (three if we consider time) and centering herself like a projector slide. The entity which curses Los Angeles is similarly flat:

the Image of Self.

This ethos reflects an unbearable accumulation of historical and cultural concepts of American Identity that were dragged by Manifest Destiny to linger here quite tangibly. To be famous to yourself and also just about to be

discovered by a validating societal Love; to taint the minds of Americans as a “household name.” In Los Angeles, this is the angle that may eventually

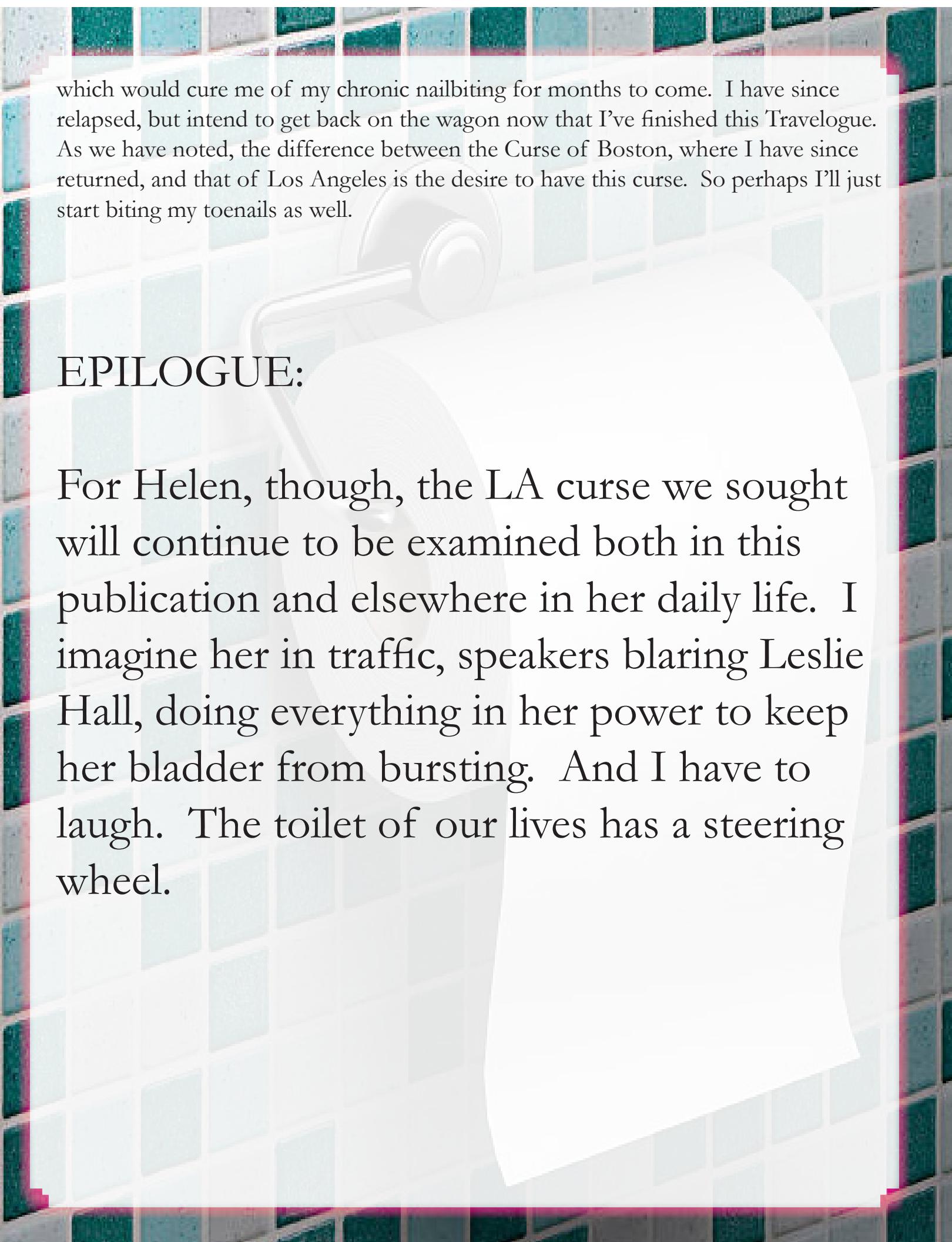
capture any of its denizens, and is generally considered desirable. There is a related and concurrent domination of the Present Tense which might only be interpreted as tension from outside the distinct boundary of the curse, which explicitly requires one to be a resident of or believer in the very ethos Dende reached quickly.

For me, this occurred when I undid my self haunting

prophecy at Venice Beach, after over 15 minutes of crossing sand to reach the Pacific. Floating there, the shoreline in each direction collapsing into the beautiful

weather, I emerged salty and ready for my

**first mani-pedi—**

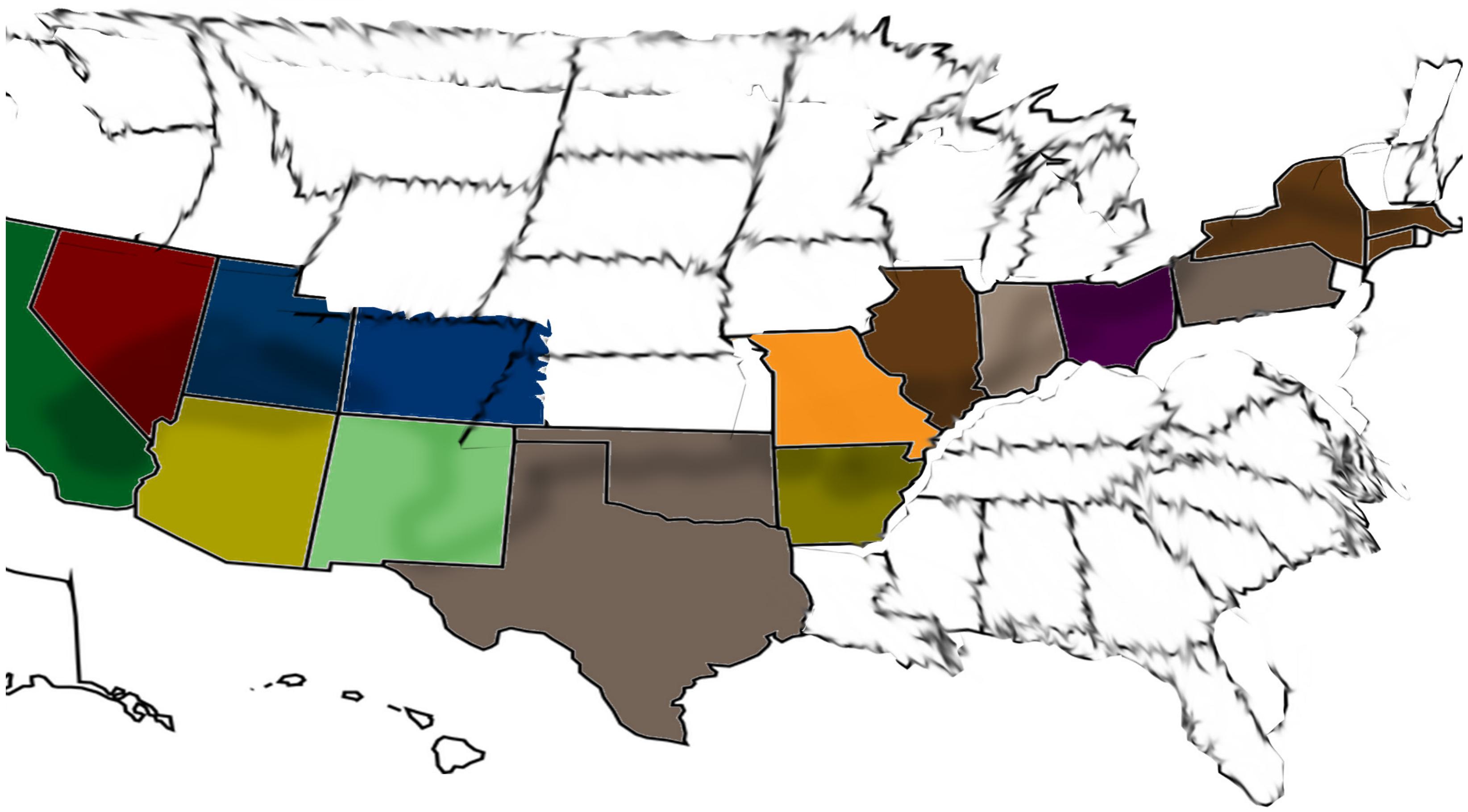


which would cure me of my chronic nailbiting for months to come. I have since relapsed, but intend to get back on the wagon now that I've finished this Travelogue. As we have noted, the difference between the Curse of Boston, where I have since returned, and that of Los Angeles is the desire to have this curse. So perhaps I'll just start biting my toenails as well.

## EPILOGUE:

For Helen, though, the LA curse we sought will continue to be examined both in this publication and elsewhere in her daily life. I imagine her in traffic, speakers blaring Leslie Hall, doing everything in her power to keep her bladder from bursting. And I have to laugh. The toilet of our lives has a steering wheel.

Base



# *Some people have a stronger stream than others*

## **1. Some people have a stronger stream than others.**

I once went to the bathroom unofficially joined by A\*\*\*\*'s mother. She was what some people would probably call a handsome woman, dressed like a lawyer of an early 2000's sitcom (lots of strong neutrals) and had a sleek grey ponytail that I can only dream of imitating. She chose the stall adjacent to my grade school self, and I had never been so astounded by the sheer power in someone else's peeing. I tinkled. She urinated. I have been impressed and intimidated by her power ever since.

## **2. You gain privacy in a public place while utilizing a public facility.** I used to have the Sad Potty in first grade. Or was it second. Probably both. That bathroom later fell prey to an orbies incident long after I had fled that place of dreary and melancholy potties.

**3. Bathrooms take in our cast off emotions and waste, and sometimes they cannot handle the load.** In my elementary school, which was named after an archangel and built in the long flat style of the middle of the 20th century, a disaster of plumbing occurred. Acting out of curiosity, or the desire to wreak havoc, or a different juvenile combination entirely, some 3rd graders flooded the sink drains with Orbeez. Orbeez are meant to expand upon touching water. The orbeez met the drain, and all fought for space in the volatile pipes. Nobody was allowed to use the bathroom that day.



## **4. You exit this world and come back.**

It can be easy to forget that while you have left, others have not—rather unlike a Narnia sort of situation. For example in 5th grade, I left for a much needed respite from Mrs. C rubbing her sagging face as she struggled to teach us long division in her voice that sounded like Eeyore on beta blockers wrapped in quailudes being caressed by Severus Snape. I returned later, after peeing quickly and then taking my time to try out some new hairstyles in the mirror dirtied by years of dirt and also emotion. After much consideration, I reverted to the original planned styling of that day, rather than plowing forward through the day clad in adventurous pigtails. Anyway, I returned to my desk with as neutral an attitude as a fifth grader could muster. After throwing myself back into the classroom, where I sat next to B\*\*\*\*\* the first boy I tried making eyes at (to no avail). The ten-year-old designated dreamboat, hockey player, son of Australian immigrants, made for the heyday of Hollister, asked,

"Did you take a dookie?"

Confused and rattled, all I could manage to do was stare and wish I was back in that tan bathroom, with windows too high to ever reach, not unlike comfort from this embarrassing affair.

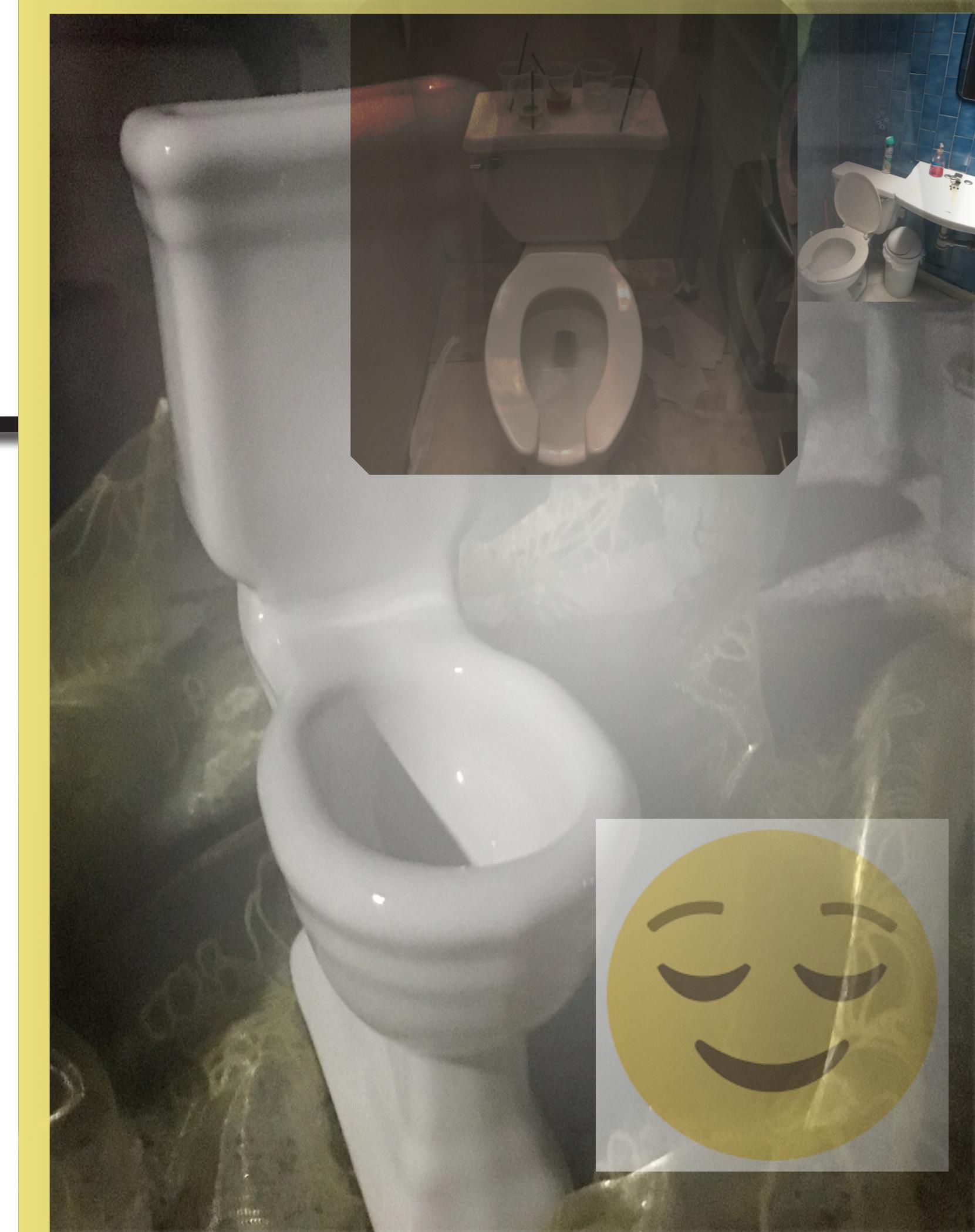
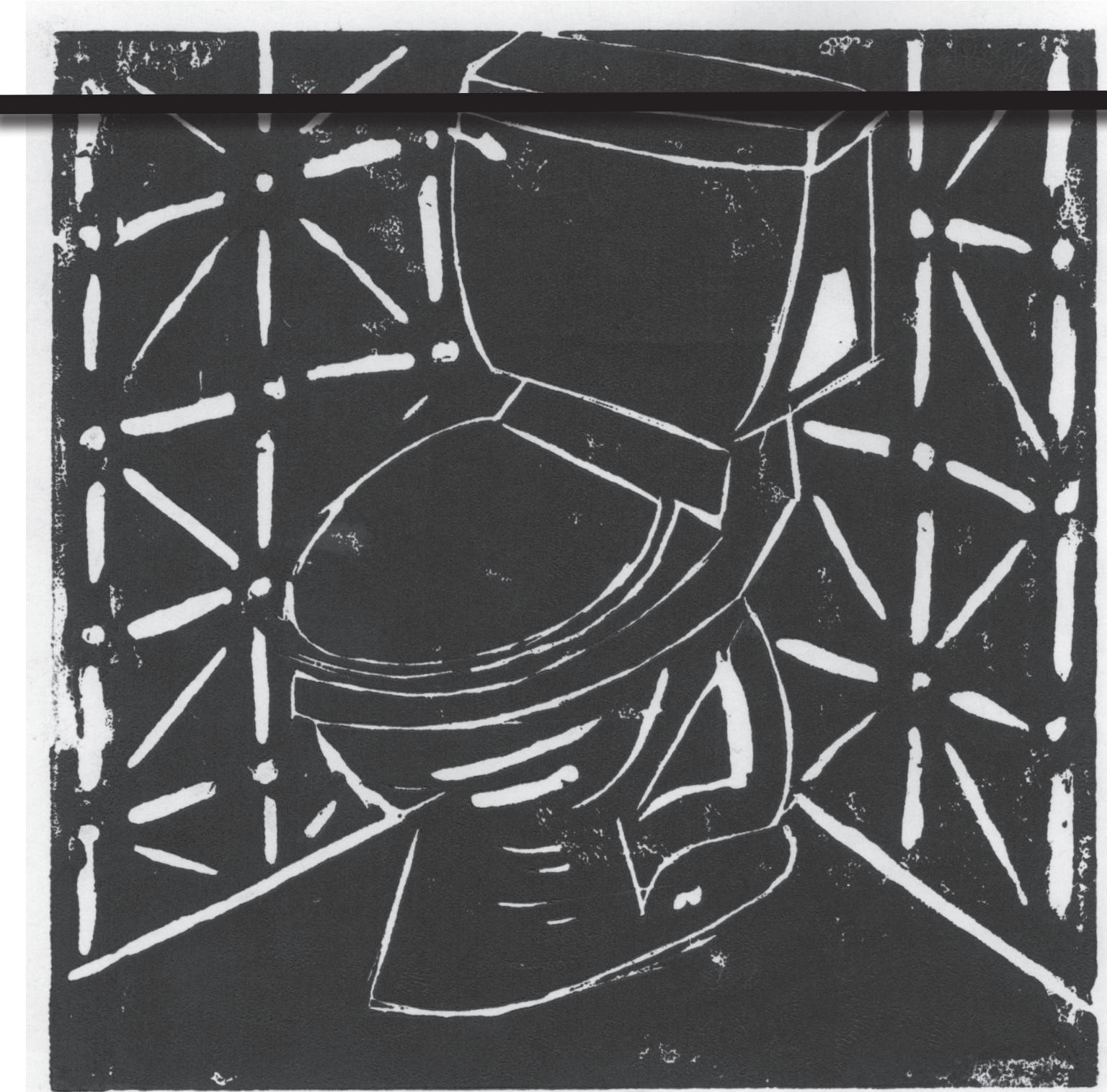
## **5. Bathrooms are a space where social stratifications may crumble into solidarity and kinship, especially for women.**

Thoughts flowed more freely like urine nowhere I can think of. Second and third grade were particularly prolific years as far as toilet philosophy went. Once, in the protection that a metal stall offers from social scrutiny and eyes, I suddenly asked everyone, "What's your favorite food group? Mine's MEAT. Like a cat or a jaguar." I was really into the Warriors book series at the time. Nobody answered. I guess they didn't obtain the expressive comfort that I did.

***The most important thing is that bathrooms guarantee at least some sliver of a private sanctuary. They are privacy in public, shelter in a storm.***

**6. For many, privacy is comfort.** It creates a frame for emotional connections to generate and regenerate, and what is such a connection without communication? When I was 3, I was visiting a friend, P\*\*\*. Since he was a boy and I was girl, I knew that I should consider him a potential mate. (this warrants another essay entirely). As he went to the bathroom to pee, door closed, I stood outside anxiously and said,  
“Pete, do you want to marry me?”

A weak but steady stream preceded a quick “no”. We never spoke of it again, and he turned out far worse than he would have as my husband.



# *Fifth Harmony: Urine/Piss as an Interstitial and/or Liminal Bodily Fluid*

Piss and Hippocrate's Four Humours  
by Hel

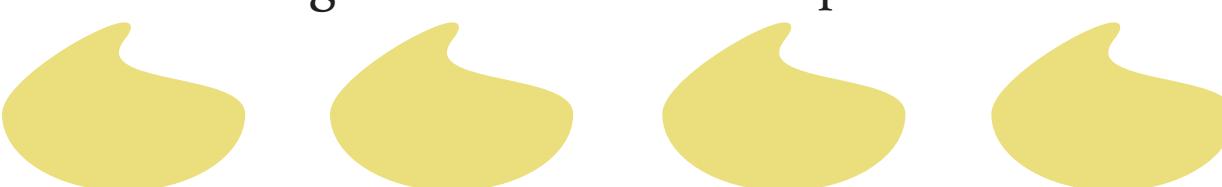
Although the Four Humours are now largely only used as personality metaphors, the medicinal system dates back to Hellenic Greece. (In Greek, Hellenic Hellas/Hellenika).<sup>1</sup> The four liquid sisters are as follows: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. The body relies on a balance of these four materials to remain healthy, but most people have a disposition towards one or the other, with consequential symptoms in personality and health disorders. Further, each ether relates to an element, a stage of the human life cycle (i.e., birth, youth, middle age, old age), a season, and a pair of two characteristics:

	HOT	COLD
DRY	YELLOW BILE (choleric)	BLACK BILE (melancholic)
MOIST	BLOOD (sanguine)	PHLEGM (phlegmatic)

However, this system has its issues. Most notably, this is not how the body works as we know it. Further, it enforced a gender binary in that “men” are hot and dry at their best, while “women” are more frequently cold and moist.<sup>2</sup> So, one may wonder, how might one queer this system which has pervaded much of scholarship, culture, and, most importantly, metaphor for so many centuries?<sup>3</sup>

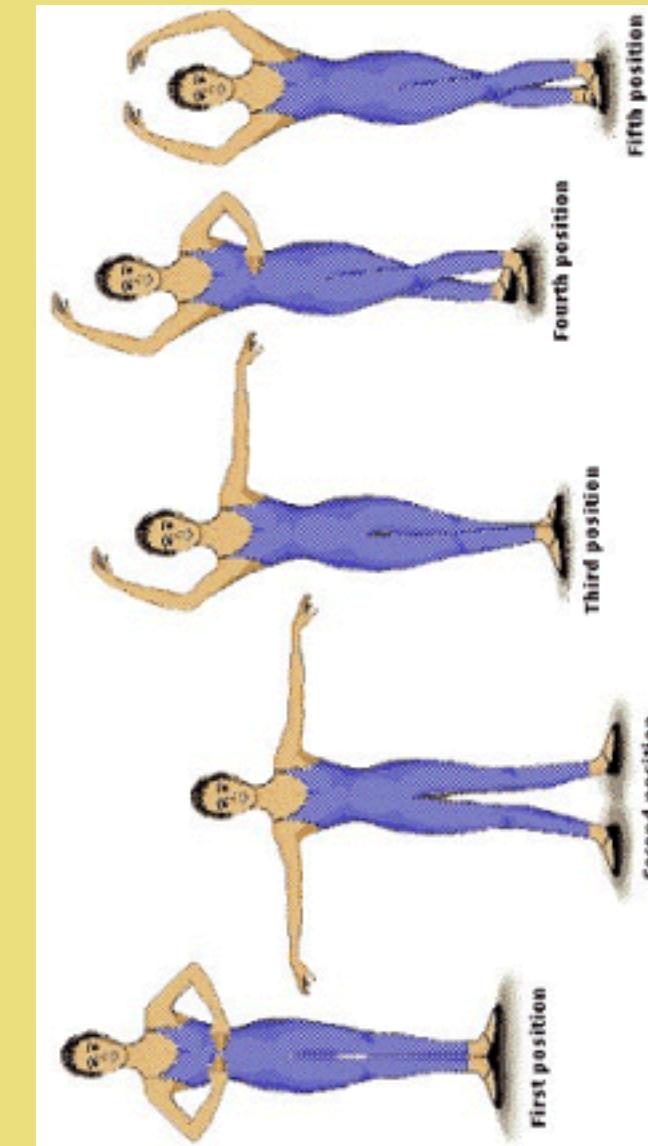
Urine, while hot and moist at its expulsion, may become cold, and perhaps even dry. (Think the crusty splotches of piss which often appear on a toilet seat from people who prefer to pee standing up). In this way, it acts as a chameleonic ether, a common denominator. It supersedes the delineations that separate the four ethers, almost defying categorization. Remind anyone of gender rejection? Additionally, watersports, the inclusion of urine in sexual acts, have long been connected with sexual deviance. Sexual deviance often (but not always—we’re looking at you straight BDSM couples on tinder) walks hand in hand with queerness.<sup>4</sup> Looking at the above table and considering bodily fluids, we can find a spot for all the different liquids that come from the human body except urine. How did they miss this one????? It’s perhaps the most uniting bodily fluid, and certainly the most encountered on a daily basis. The architectural, design, and durational devotion to urine cements its place as the most human, yet unrecognized, humour. (Also pee is funny—it’s humorous duh).

In fact, urine was seen as a fluid from which to diagnose the levels of the four humours.<sup>5</sup> The diagnostic function of urine thus solidifies its presence in medieval medicine but still denies its potential as a baseline humour itself. One can pee too much or too little, thus an imbalance just as one could have “too much blood” back in the day. Diuretics are the leeches of urine. Still, this view of piss as a secondary fluid which only communicates effects of changes in the Four Ethers does not seem to give the fluid its due respect.



Urine ought to finally take its rightful place as the all-purpose, everyday humour. Rather than keeping in balance with other ethers, urine output simply works out its own equilibrium with itself and the body. Like the other humours, it may be affected by illness, but it also is the most frequently encountered. It has no personality effect other than that of being human. Of course, everyone possesses blood and bile and phlegm, but these are not encountered with the same banality as piss. Piss is the everyperson's fluid. It spans gender and personality—we might call someone "cold-blooded" or "melancholic," but "pissy" is something everyone feels at times. It is a common, transient state, unlike the more permanent personality traits of the other ethers. Further, urine is the most obviously transient. It is a traveler with a one-way path: out of the body. And for good reason! It literally carries toxins out of you, as does sweat, which I believe is a spin-off of piss as both are metabolic waste carriers. Both need water put back in.

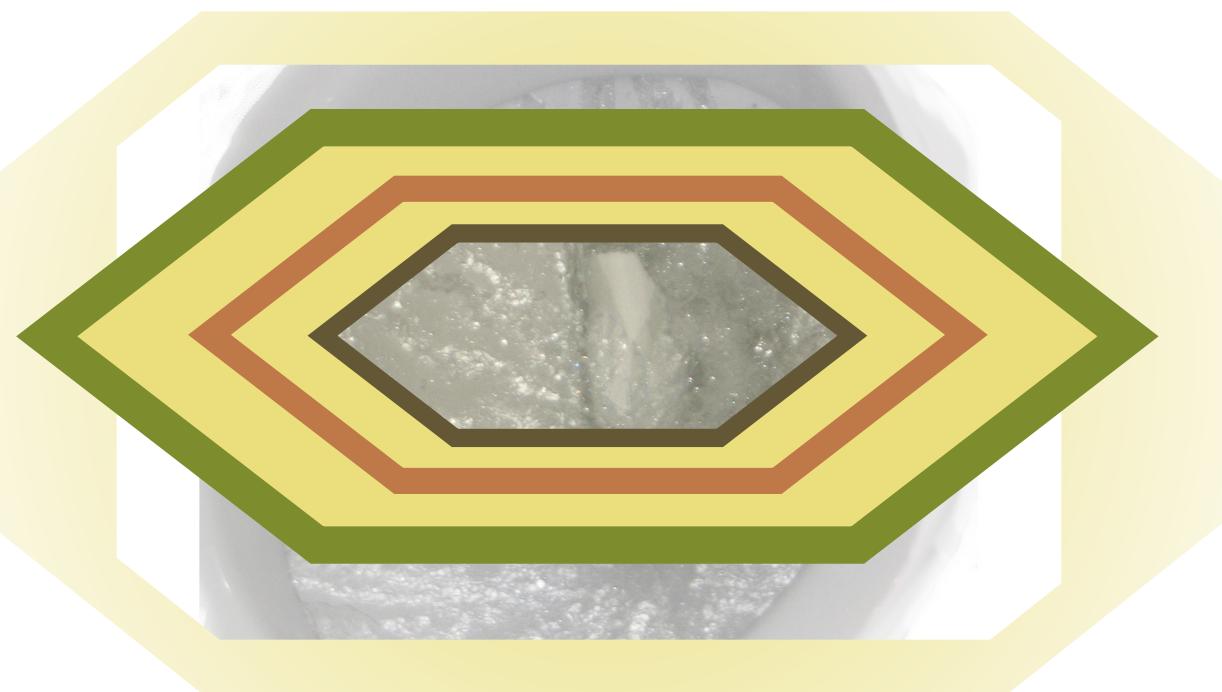
I think of piss as the sixth position of the humours. In traditional ballet, there are five canon positions. In other dance forms, notably modern dance, which was developed first at the turn of the twentieth century, and European folk dances, an additional sixth position is important. The feet remain parallel, eschewing the ballistic turnout of the other positions. It acts as a neutral position, the base for ensuing movements: jumps, turns, steps, and other poses. Piss, as a similarly appended character, is also a neutral and more general humour.



BLOODYELLOWBLACKBILLEPHLEGM

PISS

While I agree that there are arguments to made against including piss as more than a diagnostic fluid, I believe that the metaphoric and practical evidence for piss as the fifth humour make a stronger case. Unlike the other humours, it exits the body frequently and has little function when within the body. Blood carries material, biles break down nutrients, and phlegm moistens surfaces for protection. Still, these humours do exit the body—otherwise they would not have been known to the medieval idiot doctors. Piss is simply the smarter humour: it leaves the body as soon as it becomes toxic, unlike the other humours which had to be forced out.



Endnotes:

1. Take a test here: <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/O4TS/>
2. U.S. National Library of Medicine, “The World of Shakespeare’s Humours,” and *there’s the humour of it: Shakespeare’s humours* exhibition webpage, September 19, 2013. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/shakespeare/fourhumors.html>
3. The author is aware that this is not a useful activity for the LGBT community at this juncture.
4. Consider this odd and, at some points, cringey take in the Huffington Post: Doug Keeler, “Make Piss Queer Again,” in *The Huffington Post* Web edition, January 11, 2017. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/make-piss-queer-again\\_us\\_587690e6e4b065be69099112](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/make-piss-queer-again_us_587690e6e4b065be69099112)
5. David K. Osborn, “The Four Temperaments,” *Greek Medicine*, 2018. [Www.Greekmedicine.net](https://www.greekmedicine.net) ; Urine wheel from *Fasciculus Medicinae*, ca. 1491, accessed via sciencephotolibrary. <https://www.sciencephoto.com/media/300106/view/medieval-urine-wheel-and-the-four-humours>





barre class  
making it "from scratch"  
rocks and stones  
composting at home  
the library  
periwinkle  
organic whole milk, glass-bottled  
whipped cream  
driving  
embracing any lack of dietary restrictions (thus the dairy list items)  
gloves  
dark, heavy eyeliner  
putting ice in your white/rosé wine and cocktails  
butter, coconut triglycerides  
dippin' dots

detoxing  
nostalgia  
Doing it Yourself (DIY)  
health insurance  
coffee shops  
parabens  
amazon prime  
pockets  
noticeably designed socks

credits to Nic Serhan, as always

# Alt Toilet Designs

1. The Round Table\*

pictured here:

\*credit to Kevin Ngan

2. The Ass-tronaut\*

(uses vacuum suction)



And finally, the Absentee Toilet\*:

pictured on the back cover.

\*credit to anonymous donor.

(shit only partially pictured)

